



Week of Oct. 29 – Nov. 4, 2008

Native American Heritage Month

For the past 18 years, Americans have observed November as Native American Indian Heritage Month. Many Airmen take this time to recognize the contributions of Native American Indians to American history and military culture through observances and events held on bases across the Air Force.

All Airmen are encouraged to join heritage month observance committees and participate in heritage month activities on their bases. Here are some facts about a few notable Native Americans:

- American Indians have participated in U.S. military actions for more than 200 years. In the 20th Century, five American Indians have received the Medal of Honor: Jack C. Montgomery, a Cherokee from Oklahoma; Ernest Childers, a Creek from Oklahoma; Van Barfoot, a Choctaw from Mississippi; Mitchell Red Cloud Jr., a Winnebago from Wisconsin; and Charles George, a Cherokee from North Carolina
- In both World Wars, Native American Indians served in the U.S. military as “code talkers,” transmitting secret messages between military units in their native dialects. This method succeeded in confusing the enemy because the languages were often unwritten and not easily decipherable by anyone without extensive exposure or training
- John Bennett Herrington, a member of the Chickasaw nation, was the first Native American to walk in space. As a NASA astronaut, he flew his first space mission in 2002 on space shuttle Endeavor. In honor of his Native American heritage, he carried with him six eagle feathers, a braid of sweet grass, two arrowheads and his Chickasaw nation’s flag
- Other notable Native Americans include Notah Begay, the Professional Golf Association professional golfer; Cory Witherill, the Navajo racecar driver; Ben Nighthorse Campbell was a U.S. senator who also served in the Air Force from 1951 to 1953

For more information about Native American Indian Heritage Month committees or events taking place on your base, contact your local Equal Opportunity office.

Find Airman's Roll Call Online Here: <http://www.af.mil/library/viewpoints/>

Airman's Roll Call is designed for supervisors at all levels to help keep Airmen informed on current issues, clear up confusion, dispel rumors, and provide additional face-to-face communication between supervisors and their teams.